

**United States Environmental Protection Agency
Criminal Investigation Division
Investigative Activity Report**

Case Number

1000-0487

Case Title:

Pacific Steel and Recycling

Reporting Office:

Seattle, WA, Area Office

Subject of Report:

20150820 Documentation of Gas Cylinder and Release Site at Pacific Steel and Recycling

Activity Date:

August 20, 2015

Reporting Official and Date:

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

Special Agent

01-SEP-2015, Signed by: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

Approving Official and Date:

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

Assistant Special Agent in Charge

Assistant Special Agent in Charge

02-SEP-2015, Approved by: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

SYNOPSIS

On August 20, 2015, SA (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) conducted a review of the gas cylinder which released chlorine gas during steel recycling operations at Pacific Steel and Recycling in Spokane, Washington on August 12, 2015.

DETAILS

On August 20, 2015, I conducted a review of the gas cylinder which released chlorine gas during steel recycling operations at Pacific Steel and Recycling in Spokane, Washington on August 12, 2015.

At approximately 1100 hours, I met with Pacific Steel and Recycling (PSR) attorney (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) and PSR employee attorney (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) along with (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) of the Washington State Department of Ecology and (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) and (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) of the Washington State Department of Labor and Industries at the PSR property.

A tour of the incident site at 1114 North Ralph in Spokane, Washington was arranged for the Washington State representatives and me to tour the facility and inspect the gas cylinder in question and the release site on the PSR facility.

The gas cylinder was being stored inside of a PSR controlled building, located away from the original release site. The building the cylinder was being held in was a gray metal sided building with a small door and a large rollup type door for entrances. Next to the building was a large steel container with multiple gas cylinders. On the side of the steel container is a sign with the words "orphaned cylinders."

The gas cylinder appears to be what is known as a "1 ton" cylinder. Its original color appears to be gray but is almost indistinguishable at this time as the cylinder is mainly covered in surface rust. The cylinder is approximately 82" long, 24" across and 95" in circumference.

Both ends of the cylinder are concave and each end has been slightly crushed. Each end appears to have burst, with steel sections separating and leaving an opening in which gas could escape. On the bottom side of the tank it appears that the seams of the tank separated in two different areas. On the top side of the cylinder bursting site, a white powder appears to line the opening.

On the top of the cylinder there are what appears to be several valves and a small, connected piece

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of pipe. Also on top of the tank are multiple stamped numbers which were photographed. On the bottom of the cylinder is a large metal plate which is centered in the concave area. On the plate appears the following words "Penn Salt Chemicals Corporation – Tacoma, WA" "Serial 1971" and "Test Date 2-66." A second square tag attached to the cylinder appears to state "The Columbiana Boiler Company, Columbia, Ohio USA."

We then walked to the area where the recycling operation and the release on August 12, 2015, occurred. The area of the release is at the site of a large sheer machine which consists of a crushing section and sheering section. The cylinder was removed from the sheering machine during the decontamination process. The area was quickly decontaminated because chlorine gas is very corrosive upon contacting open air.

Next to the recycling sheer there was a large excavator with grapples attached to the excavator's boom. This machine lifts scrap metals and places them inside of the scrapping sheer. This machine removed the gas cylinder from the recycling sheer after the gas release. This machine also appears to have been decontaminated as wiping marks are apparent on the windows and paint.

I took documentation photos of the chlorine release area and the gas cylinder in question. These photos were placed on a DVD Rom disc and placed in the Seattle Area Office evidence room for safekeeping.